

# Decals & Safety

by Capt. Darren Smith

## Child-Locator Window Decals

Many groups, including some safety organizations, offer adhesive "child locator" window decals to be placed on the window panes of rooms where children sleep. The decals are intended to aid firefighters in more easily locating children in a fire; however the Alamo Heights Fire/EMS does not recommend the use of child-locator window decals.

The Alamo Heights Firefighters are very systematic in their response to home fires and they thoroughly perform search and rescue operations as standard procedure.



## Decals signal an area of vulnerability

Parents and caregivers should be aware of a potential safety concern about using child-locator decals. They may signal to intruders an area of vulnerability in the home, highlighting where children are asleep. That unintended possibility outweighs the questionable value the decals may have to firefighters who are trained to perform thorough searches of homes involved in serious fires, regardless of window markings.



Another concern is that window decals can be misleading. An old decal could potentially lead a firefighter on a dangerous, yet needless, prolonged search for a child who isn't there. The Alamo Heights Fire/EMS does not recognize the decals as legitimate markers because they often remain affixed to windows long after a child has out-grown the room or families with children have moved away.

## A proactive home fire safety program

Rather than using decals, concentrate on a home fire safety program. It is essential for everyone in the family to take a proactive role in fire safety, including children, who should be taught how to quickly and properly respond to the sound of smoke alarms and how to safely escape if fire breaks out. Alamo Heights Firefighters agree it is counterproductive to teach children to wait to be rescued.



## To survive a fire, every home needs:

- Working smoke alarms on each level and protecting every bedroom
- A carefully developed home fire escape plan
- Regular family fire drills so everyone can practice getting out
- Quick and decisive response in an emergency
- For additional protection from fire, consider installing an automatic fire sprinkler system in your new or remodeled home.